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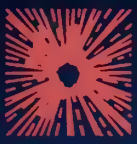
CENTER

FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISEASE PREVENTION



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State of Massachusetts
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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A Letter from the Commissioner

Today we are confronted with an entirely different set of health problems than were present 50 years ago. Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are now the leading causes of death in Massachusetts. These chronic diseases have replaced communicable diseases as the major cause of hospital admissions and lost work days. Massachusetts residents pay more than $830 million each year for the direct medical costs of these three diseases, or an average of nearly $145 per resident per year. Seventy percent of all deaths in Massachusetts are due to heart disease, cancer, and stroke. More than half of these deaths are premature, that is, they occur before age 75.

How do we reduce the personal, societal, and economic burden of these diseases? The answer lies in prevention. By changing the lifestyle habits that contribute to the development of heart disease, cancer, and stroke, and by reducing exposures to occupational and environmental toxic hazards, we can prevent a large proportion of these chronic diseases.

The Center for Health Promotion and Environmental Disease Prevention was established as the keystone of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's efforts to prevent these three diseases. The Center's programs integrate lifestyle and environmental approaches to the prevention of premature death and disability due to heart disease, cancer, and stroke. We now know that these diseases are largely caused by a common set of risk factors, most of which can be modified. Nearly everyone in Massachusetts, including our children, has one or more of these risk factors. Therefore, our prevention efforts are being directed at all Massachusetts residents and seek to reduce all risk factors simultaneously.

To achieve our aims, we must establish and maintain a working partnership with health care providers, employers, and employees across Massachusetts. By joining together, we can all work to achieve our best state of health.

Bailus Walker, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

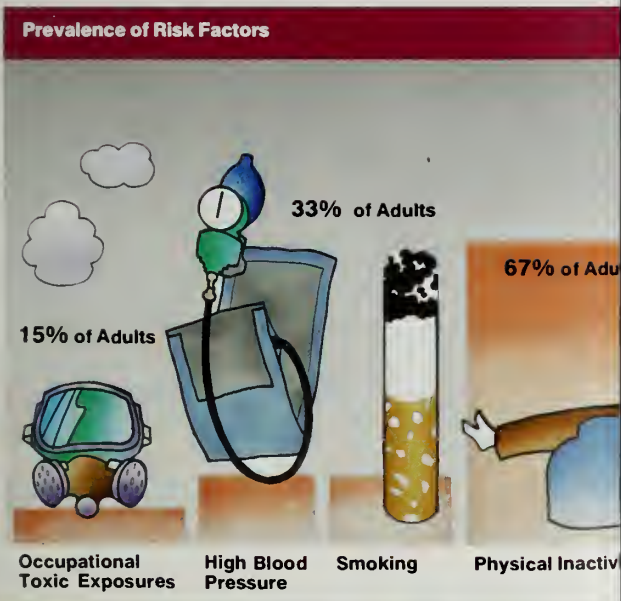
Risk Factors for Heart Disease,

Smoking

Approximately 9,200 Massachusetts residents die each year — more than one death every hour — from diseases related to cigarette smoking. Yet, one-third of Massachusetts adults still smoke. Our goal is for all Massachusetts residents to become non-smokers. Our efforts will focus on the prevention of smoking among young people and on the establishment of nonsmoking as the societal norm.

High-fat Diet

An estimated 80% of the state's population consumes a diet so high in fat as to put them at risk of developing heart disease or cancer. Approximately 40% of the calories currently consumed in the average diet are from fat. Our goal is for less than 30% of calories consumed to be from fat. We will achieve this by encouraging healthier eating habits and the ready availability of low-fat foods.



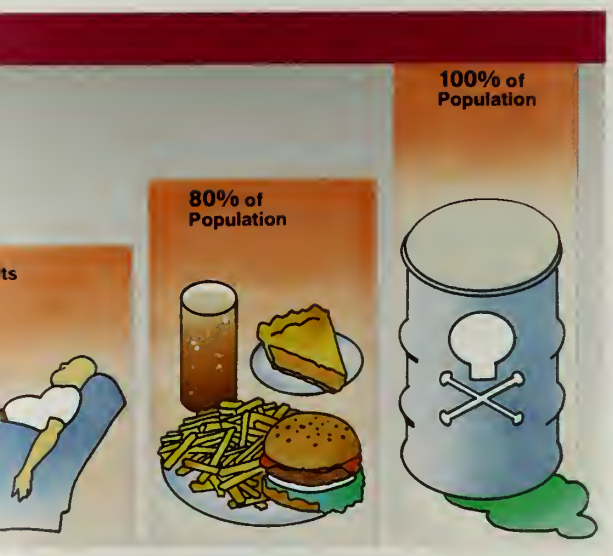
Cancer, and Stroke

Physical Inactivity

The majority of our state's residents remain physically inactive despite the so-called "fitness boom." Even among our school-aged children, half are not getting enough exercise to develop healthy hearts and lungs, and few are learning the exercise and fitness skills that will help them maintain good health as adults. Our goal is to get Massachusetts residents of all ages to engage in 20 minutes or more of vigorous exercise at least three times a week.

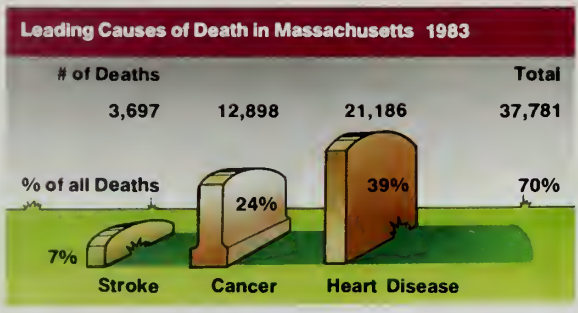
High Blood Pressure

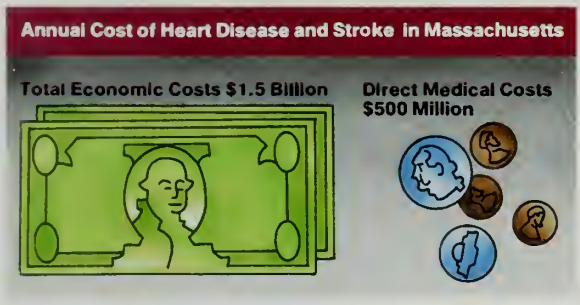
Almost one-third of all Massachusetts adults are at risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke due to uncontrolled high blood pressure. More than one-half of all adults over the age of 60 have high blood pressure. High blood pressure produces no symptoms, yet it can be easily and inexpensively identified. All Massachusetts residents should have their blood pressures checked regularly. Our goal is for all adults to keep their blood pressures below 140 mm Hg systolic and 90 mm Hg diastolic using means such as an improved diet, exercise, and, if necessary, medication.

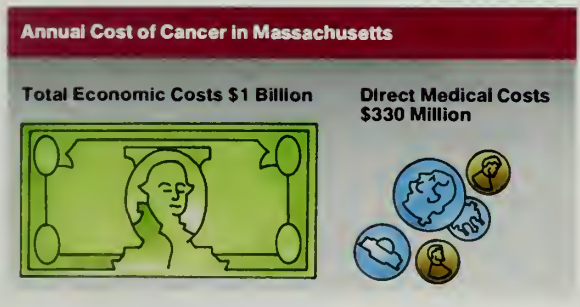


Environmental and Occupational Exposures to Hazardous Substances

Virtually all Massachusetts residents are periodically exposed to toxic substances in the environment. In addition, approximately 15% of the adult population is exposed to hazardous substances in the workplace. Our goal is to increase the knowledge and awareness of all residents regarding toxic substances in the workplace and the environment and to minimize exposure to these substances.




Annual Cost of Heart Disease and Stroke in Massachusetts
Total Economic Costs $1.5 Billion
Direct Medical Costs
$500 Million



Center for Health Promotion and Environmental Disease Prevention

Worksite Health Promotion Programs

- Promote employee fitness, smoking cessation, and nutrition education programs
- Support development of nonsmoking policies
- Encourage healthy food choices in company cafeterias and vending machines
- Develop worksite high blood pressure screening and follow-up programs

School Health Education Programs

- Stimulate health promotion education in the schools
- Advocate teacher training programs and curriculum development
- Support development of nonsmoking policies for teachers and students
- Encourage healthy food choices in school cafeterias and vending machines

Regional Health Promotion Programs

- Fund community-based high blood pressure screening and multiple risk factor reduction programs
- Provide health promotion training and consultation for health professionals
- Offer technical assistance to businesses and community health agencies that wish to develop or expand health promotion activities

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on Initiatives

Legislative Initiatives

- Sponsor legislation to restrict smoking in public places, such as restaurants
- Promote legislation to lower insurance premiums for nonsmokers
- Advocate legislation to prohibit the distribution of free cigarette samples

Reduced Exposures to Hazardous Substances

- Investigate possible environmental causes in areas with high cancer rates
- Establish guidelines for the regulation of cancer-causing substances
- Educate workers and employers regarding toxic exposures in the workplace and ways to minimize these exposures
- Train local health officers and elected officials concerning environmental toxic exposures

Research and Evaluation

- Conduct statewide survey to assess the prevalence of risk factors
- Survey worksites, schools, hospitals, and voluntary agencies to assess existing health promotion activities
- Provide technical assistance in evaluating health promotion programs

Mass Media Campaigns

- Collaborate with business and industry to cosponsor a campaign promoting healthy lifestyles
- Launch the "Great Little Decisions" campaign, including television and radio public service announcements and printed materials, to encourage all residents to initiate healthy lifestyle changes
- Work with television and radio stations and newspapers to promote statewide awareness about reducing risk from lifestyle behaviors and environmental toxic exposures

The Center's main administrative office is located in Boston. The Center is staffed by health professionals from a variety of backgrounds including chronic disease epidemiology, health education, environmental toxicology, occupational health, industrial hygiene, and program evaluation. The coordinators of the Center's regional health promotion programs work out of the Department's regional offices in Lakeville, Amherst, Tewksbury, and Rutland, as well as the Boston office. A Scientific Advisory Council reviews the Center's programs and provides technical expertise.

For further information about the Center or available materials, call 617-727-7170 or 727-2662.

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Michael S. Dukakis
Governor

Philip W. Johnston
Secretary of Human Services

Bailus Walker, Jr.
Commissioner of Public Health

January 1986